(b) whether Government has been seized of the latest forecast about world rice production in 2008 made by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) indicating an increase of estimated 1.8 per cent in production;

(c) if so, whether Government has reviewed the prospect of the same in India *vis-a-vis* the ground realities;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) if not, the rationale therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The Government has been working on two major policy planks to ensure food security in the country. The first policy plank is to boost agricultural production and productivity in the country by ensuring remunerative prices to farmers and supporting agricultural development programmes. The second policy plank being followed is to insulate vulnerable sections of society especially Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana families against shortfalls in availability of foodgrains and to keep market prices of foodgrains under check.

Under these policies, the Government has taken a number of measures such as launching of National Food Security Mission and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna to increase production and productivity of cereals, pulses, oil seeds, fruits and vegetable crops during the 11th Plan period. The Government has been implementing the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and a number of welfare schemes under which allocations of foodgrains at highly subsidized prices are being made, particularly for BPL and Antyodaya Anna Yojana families and other vulnerable sections.

The increased production and productivity of food and other crops are expected to help augment buffer stocks of wheat and rice in the Central Pool.

(b) to (d) Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the UNO in its first forecast for the year 2008 has indicated an increase in the world production of rice by about 1.8%. As per FAO's publication No. 2, April, 2008 on crop prospects and food situation, India is not having shortfall in aggregate food production/supplies and forecast for total cereal production in 2008 is of 251.7 million tons.

(e) Question does not arise.

Production of edible oils

3424. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the production of various types of edible oils in the country during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) whether it is a fact that the prices of edible oils have gone up by 30 per cent in the last one year;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government is importing 5 million tonnes of edible oils to meet the shortage; and

(d) if so, what remedial measures his Ministry is taking to increase the production of edible oil in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The estimated domestic production of main nine vegetable oils in the country during the last three years is as under:—

(Quantity in lakh tonnes)

Name of Oil	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Groundnut Oil	15.58	18.38	11.19
Rapeseed/Mustard Oil	23.54	25.21	23.05
Soyabean Oil	11.00	13.24	14.16
Sunflower Oil	03.92	04.75	4.05
Sesame Oil	02.09	01.99	1.92
Nigerseed Oil	00.34	00.32	0.36
Safflower Oil	00.52	00.69	0.72
Castor Oil	03.17	03.96	3.05
Linseed Oil	00.51	00.52	0.50
TOTAL	60.67	69.06	59.00

(b) The domestic wholesale prices of main edible oils as on 21.04.2008 compared to last year are as under:—

(Rs. per quintal)

Name of Oil/Centre	Prices as on 21.04.2008	Prices as on 21.04.2007	% variation
Soyabean Oil (Mumbai)	5340.00	4430.00	20.54%
Mustard Oil (Delhi)	5660.00	4570.00	23.85%
Groundnut Oil (Mumbai)	6700.00	6650.00	0.75%
Sunflower Oil (Mumbai)*	6600.00	5050.00	30.69%
Cottonseed Oil (Delhi)	5550.00	4550.00	21.98%
Sesame Oil (Mumbai)	8000.00	5450.00	46.79%
Coconut Oil (Kochi)	6100.00	4750.00	28.42%
Vanaspati (Delhi)**	920.00	800.00	15.00%
RBD Palmolein (Mumbai)	5400.00	4580.00	17.90%

* Refined

** 15 Kg pack

(c) The Government have introduced a Scheme for Distribution of Subsidised Imported Oils through State Governments/UTs. The subsidies from GoI will be restricted to a total of one million tonnes of edible oil under this Scheme during financial year 2008-09. However,

the Scheme will initially by implemented for 3 months, after which it will be reviewed for further extension.

(d) Some of the remedial measures taken/being taken to increase production of oilseeds and hence of oils in the country are:—

(i) The Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oilpalm and Maize (ISOPOM) has recently been modified as a part of National Food Security Mission with regard to norms and pattern of assistance, inclusion of new components and additional implementing agencies.

(ii) In view of the fact that there is a constraint in area expansion under oilseeds, the thrust during the 11th Plan will be given towards yield improvement in oilseeds besides promoting the cultivation of Oilpalm, a crop with a potential of producing 3-3.5 MT of palm oil per ha. for augmenting the indigenous availability of edible oils in the country.

(iii) Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is engaged in development of high yielding improved varieties, production and protection technologies in oilseeds for increasing the production and productivity and also to make oilseeds cultivation profitable to the farmers.

(iv) Enhanced incentives to the farmers through fixation of Minimum Support Price (MSP) of major oilseeds.

Hoarding of essential food items

3425. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state: (a) what steps have been taken by Government to prevent hoarding of essential food items; and

(b) what has been the outcome of these steps, particularly the details of the raids conducted against hoarders, quantity of food item seized from them and the action taken against them in the past one year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Powers have been vested with State Governments for taking action under the provisions of Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980. The Central Government has by its Order notified on 29.08.2006 kept in abeyance the "Removal of (Licensing Requirements, Stock Limits and Movement Restrictions) on Specified Food Stuffs Order, 2002 in so far as they related to wheat and pulses. Furthermore, *vide* its Order dated 07.04.2008 the Central Government has taken similar action in respect of edible oils, edible oilseeds and rice. By virtue of these orders the State Governments have been empowered to issue orders regulating purchase, movement, sale, supply, distribution and storage for sale of these commodites. These will help State Governments to take effective action to bring out the hoarded stock of these items to ensure availability to the common people at reasonable prices.